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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/727,516	12/04/2000	Jeong-Jin Kim	3430-149P	5548

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EXAMINER

ALANKO, ANITA KAREN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1765

DATE MAILED: 09/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/727,516

Applicant(s)

KIM ET AL.

Examiner

Anita K Alanko

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 7/19/04, 5/12/04.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 4-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

Specification

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: The new term “alone” in amended claim 4 lacks explicit basis in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 4, 8 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yates (US 6,350,322 B1).

Yates discloses a method comprising:

etching the objects by providing etching solution into the vessel (see col.11, lines 19-21);

forcing out the etching solution alone from the vessel by providing pressurized gas into the vessel (col.11 line 22, the “purging step”);

cleaning the objects by providing cleaning solution into the vessel (col.11, lines 29-30 the “removing” step) and

draining the cleaning solution from the vessel (col.10, lines 1-9).

As to claim 8, Yates discloses deionized water (col.11, lines 33-34).

As to claims 10-11, Yates discloses drying with IPA (col.12, lines 1-24).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yates (US 6,350,322 B1).

The discussion of Yates from above is repeated here.

As to claim 5, Yates does not disclose using different draining pipes. However, apparatus limitations are given little weight in method claims. Apparatus limitations, unless they affect the process in a manipulative sense, may have little weight in process claims. *In re Tarczy-Hornoch* 158 USPQ 141, 150 (CCPA 1968); *In re Edwards* 128 USPQ 387 (CCPA 1961); *Stalego v. Heymes* 120 USPQ 473, 478 (CCPA 1959); *Ex parte Hart* 117 USPQ 193 (PO BdPatApp 1957); *In re Freeman* 44 USPQ 116 (CCPA 1940); *In re Sweeney* 72 USPQ 501 (CCPA 1947).

In addition, it would have been obvious to use different draining pipes so that the etching solution is capable of being regenerated and reused, which saves time and money, rather than being mixed with the cleaning solution.

As to claim 6, Yates does not disclose the gas used for purging. However, Yates does teach that nitrogen is a useful gas for filling vessels because it is inert to both the semiconductor structure and the vessel (col.5, lines 6-16). This in turn would increase the final yield by reducing contamination of the final product. It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to use nitrogen in the method of Yates because Yates teaches that it is inert to the object and to the vessel, which reduces contamination.

As to claim 7, Yates discloses to use HF, not oxalic acid. However, oxalic acid is a well known oxidizing agent. It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to use oxalic acid as a treatment liquid in the method of Yates because it is a conventional treatment liquid for semiconductor structures.

As to claim 9, Yates discloses to drain by using gravity (col.10, line 13), not by using a pump. However, it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to use a pump to enhance the step of forcing out the etching solution because pumps are conventional to drain liquids. Further, apparatus limitations, unless they affect the process in a manipulative sense, may have little weight in process claims. *In re Tarczy-Hornoch* 158 USPQ 141, 150 (CCPA 1968); *In re Edwards* 128 USPQ 387 (CCPA 1961); *Stalego v. Heymes* 120 USPQ 473, 478 (CCPA 1959); *Ex parte Hart* 117 USPQ 193 (PO BdPatApp 1957); *In re Freeman* 44 USPQ 116 (CCPA 1940); *In re Sweeney* 72 USPQ 501 CCPA 1947).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 5/12/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The drawings filed 12/04/00 are acceptable.

The substitute specification is accepted. It is objected to because it lacks explicit basis for the amended phrase "alone". (Presumably both the etchant and etch reaction products are removed.)

Applicant argues that Yates does not disclose the combination etching, cleaning and forcing out. This is not persuasive, see rejection above. Examiner is not relying upon the first embodiment, and the second embodiment includes wet etching (col.6, lines 29-30). The etchant and the rinsing are done in sequential steps, see the rejection. As best determined, claim 22 of Yates, which is relied upon in the rejection, is not directed to the third embodiment is not relied upon by the examiner.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anita K Alanko whose telephone number is 571-272-1458. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri until 2:30 pm (Wed until 11:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on 571-272-1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Anita K. Alanko

Anita K Alanko
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1765